

Charles William King

Charles William King (5 September 1818 — 25 March 1888), was a British Victorian writer and collector of gems.

Early life

King was born at Newport, Monmouthshire, and entered Trinity College, Cambridge, in 1836.^[1] He graduated in 1840, and obtained a fellowship in 1842. He was a senior fellow at the time of his death in London.

Gem Expert

He spent much time in Italy, where he laid the foundation of his collection of engraved gems and gemstones, which, having been increased by subsequent purchases in London, was sold by him in consequence of his failing eyesight, and was presented in 1881 to the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

He was recognized universally as one of the greatest authorities in this department of art. His chief works on the subject are:

- *Antique Gems, their Origin, Uses and Value* (1860), a complete and exhaustive treatise;
- *The Natural History of Precious Stones and Gems and of the Precious Metals* (1865);
- *Early Christian Numismatics* (1873);
- *The Handbook of Engraved Gems* (2nd ed., 1885);
- *The Gnostics and their Remains* (2nd ed. by J Jacobs, 1887, which led to an animated correspondence in the *Athenaeum*).

Classicist

King took holy orders, but never held any cure.

He was thoroughly familiar with the works of Greek and Latin authors, especially those of Pausanias and Pliny the Elder, which bore upon the subject in which he was most interested; but he had little taste for the minutiae of verbal criticism.

In 1869, he brought out an edition of *Horace*, illustrated from antique gems. He also translated Plutarch's *Moralia* (1882) and the theosophical works of the Emperor Julian (1888), for Bohn's Classical Library.

References

- [1] Venn, J.; Venn, J. A., eds. (1922–1958). "King, Charles William (<http://venn.lib.cam.ac.uk/cgi-bin/search.pl?sur=&suro=c&fir=&firo=c&cit=&cito=c&c=all&tex=KN835CW&sy=&eye=&col=all&maxcount=50>)". *Alumni Cantabrigienses (10 vols)* (online ed.). Cambridge University Press.
- Chisholm, Hugh, ed. (1911). "King, Charles William". *Encyclopædia Britannica* (11th ed.). Cambridge University Press.

External links

- "The Gnostics and their Remains" (<http://www.sacred-texts.com/gno/gar/>) - online text of the book

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